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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF
PARENT-TEACHER INTERVIEWS
IN EDMONTON PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

by



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A THESIS

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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "The Effectiveness of Parent-Teacher Interviews in Edmonton Public Elementary Schools," submitted by John David Pollock Cuyler in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

Date . . September 28, 1970 . .

ABSTRACT

The effectiveness of programs of scheduled parent-teacher interviews, as used in the elementary schools of the Edmonton public school system, was measured in two ways. Each of the two ways was used with each of three groups--the principals of schools which participated in parent-teacher interviews, a random sample of teachers who participated, and a random sample of parents who participated.

Effectiveness was first measured by asking each respondent to rate the effectiveness of the interviews he had participated in. The second method was to have each respondent rate each purpose of a list of purposes of parent-teacher interviews as to its perceived importance. The list of purposes was derived from the literature. Then using the same list, respondents were asked to rate each purpose as to the extent that it had been achieved.

The measurements of effectiveness of the three groups were tested for significant between-group differences using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Two Sample Test. Null hypotheses of no significant difference had been formulated. The .05 level of significance was used.

Additional questions were asked of each respondent. These questions identified those basic mechanics of parent-

teacher interviews which were considered to be favorable in promoting effectiveness--the number of interviews per year, the period of the school year used, the length of interview, and the period of the day used. Other questions checked the actual involvement of participants in interviews. Among-group differences in this final section were tested with null hypotheses using the chi square test at the .05 level of significance.

All groups considered the interviews to be at least very valuable and effective. All groups perceived each of the purposes to be at least very important, but for one minor exception. All groups felt that the purposes were being achieved. The results indicated a high degree of satisfaction.

The between-group differences in the above were, for the most part, not significant at the .05 level.

The results of the final section indicated strong favor from all three groups for having two interviews per year, for using any period of the year except May-June (although principals did not favor September-October), for interviews lasting from eleven to twenty minutes, and for the late afternoon period of the day being used for interviews. The among-group differences detected in this section did not materially affect these findings.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The idea of a program of scheduled parent-teacher interviews (or conferences) is not a new one to most educators in North America, but the use of such interviews is by no means universal. At least three-quarters of the elementary schools of the Edmonton public school system are presently using such a program. A reappraisal of methods of reporting pupil progress to parents is currently being made in this school system. During the 1968-69 term an experimental report card form was introduced and used in about thirty elementary schools. Since this report card gives a reduced amount of information to parents, interviews between parents and teachers take on a new significance, even though such interviews have the reporting of pupil progress as only one of their many purposes.

A Master's thesis entitled "A Study of Parent-Teacher Conferences in the County of Ponoka," completed in 1964 by Martin, provides a complete picture of the practices in that setting, and details aspects of such interviews in a way that would prove useful to any school using them. This current study was conducted to measure the effectiveness of parent-teacher interviews in the Edmonton situation.

THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

The problem was to measure the effectiveness of programs of scheduled parent-teacher interviews and used in the elementary schools of the Edmonton public school system.

Sub-problems

1. To compare the measurements of effectiveness of the three groups of participants in order to test for significant between-group differences.
2. To examine some of the mechanics of the interviews in order to identify those which are most favorable to effectiveness.

THE MEASUREMENT OF EFFECTIVENESS

The main problem, that of measuring effectiveness of parent-teacher interviews, was approached in two ways:

(a) by asking the participants of the interviews to give a general rating of effectiveness of such interviews on a five-point scale.

(b) by establishing which purposes were perceived by the participants to be important and to what extent; and and then by measuring the extent to which the established purposes had been achieved.

AN OUTLINE OF THIS STUDY

This study was conducted with five parts which

followed generally the plan suggested by the problem and sub-problems. Part A dealt with the general ratings of effectiveness; Part B with the perceived purposes of parent-teacher interviews; Part C with the extent to which the purposes had been achieved; Part D with the differences between groups of participants that resulted in the previous three parts; and Part E with the mechanics of interviews which were most favorable to effectiveness.

In Chapter II of this thesis the related literature will be reviewed. Chapter III will describe the research procedures. The research findings will be presented in Chapter IV, and the final chapter will include a summary and other related matters.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

MARTIN'S THESIS

Martin (1964, p. 11) provided a detailed summary of the literature on parent-teacher interviews to that date. Even at that time she was able to refer to a great many general textbooks in elementary school administration, reference books dealing specifically with parent-teacher interviews or other parent-teacher relationships, and articles from periodicals which gave information on the topic.

She traced the history of the parent-teacher interview from its beginning in the 1930's, through the 1940's and 1950's which saw the practice spread widely in the United States and into Alberta in the latter decade. At the time her thesis was written many areas of Alberta were either using parent-teacher interviews or recommending their use. Other parts of Canada began using them during the 1950's.

The values of these interviews, both as a supplement to, or replacement for, report cards and as a means of creating an improved home-school relationship were detailed by many authorities. Their ideas regarding the values of such interviews at that time included such things as:

(1) getting acquainted, (2) exchanging information, (3) promoting understanding, (4) getting reactions, and (5) establishing respect for each other's problems.

While a number of authors suggested that the prime use of interviews was to supplement the report card, one or two authors at that time were advocating the replacement of report cards completely with parent-teacher interviews.

Martin found that much had been written about the various mechanics of these interviews. One or two interviews per year were suggested by many as being the best number. Suggestions regarding the length of the interviews varied from fifteen minutes to forty-five minutes each. A "break" between interviews was thought to be of benefit to the teacher. There was much agreement that interviews should not be relegated to after-school hours, except for evening interviews which might be necessary to accommodate some parents. The keeping of records had also been discussed thoroughly in the literature by that time.

Martin (1964, p. 25) summarized an article by Maves (1958, pp. 219-224) which distinguished between "high-level" and "low-level" performances in interviews. The former were characterized by good rapport, a positive beginning, use of illustrations, plans for helping the child, use of commendation, and a free exchange of information. The latter, by domination by the teacher or parent, rigid adherence to a guide sheet, lack of common planning, lack of illustrations of the child's work and one or both of the parties being on

the defensive. This appears to be an early attempt at understanding factors which promote the effectiveness of such interviews.

Preplanning was emphasized by many of the authors up to that time as being the responsibility of both teachers and administrators. It is, of course, only one aspect of the roles of the administrators and teachers involved in these interviews. Since Martin's research dealt extensively with the roles of principals, teachers, and parents, her summary of the literature included many ideas regarding the roles of these participants.

The principal's role had been described by many authors. It includes creating favorable attitudes, defining purposes, preparing teachers for interviews, and being available to help with difficult conferences. The teacher's role had been analyzed as including the observation of pupils from the beginning of the year and the gathering of samples of children's work in preparation for the interviews. Lists of guidelines for teachers to follow during interviews were available in the literature at the time of Martin's thesis.

The literature contained the suggestion that parents who were unable to attend interviews could be contacted by visiting the home, by telephone, or by a personal letter.

The importance of preparing the students for the interviews so they would see them as being valuable and important was also cited by many authors.

The final section of Martin's review of the literature dealt with the evaluation of parent-teacher conferences. Constant evaluation by both teachers and parents was suggested.

MORE RECENT LITERATURE

The period since Martin's thesis has seen a continuation of interest in the parent-teacher interview. The topic has been included in recent elementary school administration textbooks and in periodicals.

Much of what has been written recently about parent-teacher interviews repeats those basic ideas which had received the general agreement of authorities by 1964. However, as one might expect, the literature indicates the constant attempt to improve the effectiveness of parent-teacher interviews and to modify the practice where modification would seem to be of benefit.

A survey of recent literature reveals that most of what has been written falls into two categories. The first of these concerns the values and purposes of parent-teacher interviews, and contains much which is applicable to this present study. The other includes the rather large amount that has been written about planning for and carrying out such interviews. While this is an area which would be very useful to those engaged in parent-teacher interviews, much of it falls outside the limits of this study.

Very few of the ideas in the literature are based on

research. Since very little research has been done regarding the parent-teacher interview, the ideas appear to be the opinions of experts who have had first-hand experiences or who have gathered opinions from others who have. The degree of agreement that exists among these experts may attest to the validity of many of the ideas, but the need for research-based corroboration is certainly apparent.

Recent Ideas Regarding the Values and Purposes of Parent-Teacher Interviews

In a statement of the value of the parent-teacher conference, Wayne L. Herman (1966, p. 86) says:

. . . At such a conference, there can be a mutual exchange of certain important information about a child which would never be put into writing--both positive and negative remarks. Questions are asked, explanations are made, and misunderstandings are cleared up.

Such a statement points to the fact that the reporting of pupil progress is not the only purpose of such interviews. However, as Jenson (Jenson et al., 1967, p. 207) reiterates in his textbook of elementary school administration, the parent-teacher conference is a method of reporting pupil progress that ". . . adequately meets the real purpose of reporting and is consistent with all the principles of reporting."

That parents want more information from the school than traditional methods of reporting provide is borne out by two recent studies. In a study (Banfield, Bower, & Wilkie, 1966, pp. 63-66) conducted in three contrasting areas of England where, apparently, there has been little use of

parent-teacher interviews, the main conclusion was that not enough information was being given to parents, particularly in the areas of methods and school organization. Parents appeared to want closer contact with schools. In her doctoral dissertation, Mathis (1965) showed that while the parents of her sample felt they did have a degree of understanding of what the school was trying to do, they also indicated clearly that they would like more information than they are now getting.

Support for the broader view of the purposes of parent-teacher interviews comes from recent publications by Cooper (1967, p. 155), Nicholson (1965, p. 32) who refers to the ". . . absurd assumption that the sole purpose of the regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences is to report . . . ," and Cawelti (1966, p. 293) who comments that "reporting" suggests one-way communication with only the teacher talking.

Other purposes are suggested by the above authors as well as by many others who have written on the subject recently. Nicholson (1965, p. 32) says that the primary purpose must be the obtaining of information, and that this suggests the need for the development by the teacher of the interview skills of listening, observing, and questioning. Cawelti (1966, p. 294) thinks the emphasis should be on "creative evaluation" which will take place ". . . when parent and teacher sit down together to determine, through effective communication, how well co-operatively defined goals for the child are being met."

Johnson (1966, p. 48) agrees with others that the ". . . general purpose . . . is for parents and teachers to share their knowledge about the total child and thereby gain a better understanding of the child's needs and interests," but goes on to suggest that the "specific purposes" should vary from conference to conference to suit the problems and needs, and the growth and development of the particular child.

Hunter (1967, p. 25) in discussing home and school communication, says that the parent-teacher conference provides the opportunity for validation or refutation by the teacher of the ". . . educational message, conveyed verbally or nonverbally by the learner" to the home daily. Cooper (1967, p. 155) adds that home-school communication may be damaging to the relationship if the teacher does not have the ability to communicate with parents tactfully in a face-to-face situation.

The purpose of a study by Gorman (1965) was to determine whether a course on the parent-teacher conference given to students in teacher education would be of value. In appraising the course that was given, the following learnings were judged to be of greatest value:

. . . (a) building rapport and a sound working relationship with parents is of great importance in a successful conference; (b) learning what the parent's values and interests are is of importance to the teacher as she works with the child; (c) it is important for the teacher to appear confident and well-poised in order for parents to feel at ease and that this requires careful preparation by the teacher . . . (p. 892).

These results give support to Cooper's previous comments.

Finally, the writings of three recent authors will

be used to indicate the general agreement which exists in the literature regarding purposes. LeFevre (1967, pp. 1-2) says:

The avowed purpose of the parent-teacher conference is open, face-to-face communication between parents and teacher so that each may function more adequately in promoting the child's development. The teacher can teach more effectively if she is aware of the special interests, abilities, anxieties, problems, and circumstances of each child. More than this, she can know the child much better if she knows his parents. . . . The parents in their turn, can co-operate with the school's efforts if they know and have confidence in their child's teacher, and can exchange information and discuss mutual problems with her.

A summary of Murk's list (1965, p. 302) of the values and goals of conferences includes these:

(1) ". . . the teacher is more likely to receive parental support and understanding which will enhance pupil achievement."

(2) ". . . opportunity to compare ideas on the direction and progress of a child's capacities, interests, and adjustment."

(3) ". . . helps a teacher become more aware of the child's home environment and developing personality. . . ."

(4) ". . . the teacher's opportunity to learn about the child's reaction to school, family adjustment, leisure-time activities, health history, and home responsibilities."

(5) ". . . parents get to know the teacher as a human being and not see her as an institutional fixture."

(6) ". . . an opportunity for the teacher to funnel parental energy into constructive educational avenues. . . ."

(7) ". . . to help parents understand that they alone can provide for effective home study."

(8) ". . . answering questions and concerns pertaining to curriculum, grading, teacher materials, grouping, class projects, field trips, and school rules."

(9) "The most meaningful conference goal is that of enhancing the relationship between parents and children."

Then, under the heading, "Many Purposes for Conference,"

Barry E. Herman (1968, p. 43) says:

A teacher may request a parent-teacher conference to become better acquainted with the parent, to learn about the child's background and interests, to obtain information about social problems at home, or to discuss the child's academic achievement, his personality, his behavior, or his relations with his peers. The parent, on the other hand, has an opportunity to learn about the child's progress in school, how to help the child at home, and to become better acquainted with the teacher and the total school program.

Recent Ideas Regarding the Mechanics of Interviews

As mentioned above, much has been written recently regarding the carrying out of parent-teacher interviews, but the scope of this study causes only a small amount of this to be relevant here.

Two studies have dealt with matters which are included in the scope of this thesis. Creaser (1966, pp. 2309A-2310A) examined the circumstances under which parents and teachers meet. She found that ". . . in nine cases out of ten parent-teacher contact meant mother-teacher contact," and that almost sixty percent of the interviews lasted over fifteen minutes. Jones (1965,

pp. 5787-5788) attempted to determine the relationship between success of parent-teacher conferences and a variety of factors. He found that there appeared to be no relationship between success and which parent attended the conference, or even if both did; and that parents preferred a January reporting period whereas teachers were evenly divided between November and January. An additional finding of Jones' study was the fact that his samples of parents and teachers in Des Moines, Iowa, both reported that the parent-teacher conferences were an effective reporting technique.

Two modifications to the usual patterns of programs of interviews appeared in the literature. Mathias (1967, p. 86) presented the case for allowing the child to be present at a parent-teacher conference. Referring to the success that was achieved in his home district in Colorado, Mathias says:

Children . . . no longer suffer from fears, anxieties, or apprehensive feelings during and after parent-teacher conferences. They enter into the conference themselves, four times each year, and apparently enjoy and profit by it.

He adds that while students were a little nervous at first, they soon entered in and participated actively, sometimes diagnosing and verbalizing some of their own problems.

The experience of West (1966, p. 25) in his Massachusetts school was that teachers were ill-prepared for conferences which were held at the end of a regular

school day. So besides preparing guidebooks to assist the teachers, permission was obtained to dismiss the pupils at noon of five successive Thursdays so that the afternoons would be completely free for conferences. This idea does not appear to be relevant to this study, since in the Edmonton public system the common practice has been to hold the interviews in the late afternoon.

Conclusion

Perhaps a fitting conclusion to this review of the literature is found in an article by Sharrock (1968, pp. 185-195) that summarizes the state of home-school relations on the British scene. She states that there have been few attempts to assess the effectiveness of the various forms of home-school contact. She does refer to one unpublished study that found ". . . significant changes in parental attitudes . . . , together with a relationship between children's progress and the degree of co-operation with their parents (p. 192)." Her conclusion, however, is that ". . . there is certainly scope for much more research into the types of contact between homes and schools and into their effectiveness (p. 192)."

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

RESEARCH DESIGN

Delimitations

This study was based on the opinions of a sample of the principals, teachers, and the parents of those elementary schools of the Edmonton Public School Board which were using a program of scheduled parent-teacher interviews during the 1968-69 school year.

Definitions of Terms Used

Parent-teacher interview. This term was used to refer to an interview which was part of a program of scheduled parent-teacher interviews.

Participants. The participants of such an interview were considered to be the one or two parents involved, the teacher or teachers, and the principal of the school.

Assumptions

1. Parent-teacher interviews are effective if they achieve the purposes for which they are held.

2. Parent-teacher interviews are effective if they are perceived to be so by the principals, teachers

and parents involved with them.

Limitations

1. Effectiveness of parent-teacher interviews was related to the achievement of purposes. This study did not allow for consideration of many of the variables which might conceivably relate to the effectiveness of such programs of interviews.

2. Not all members of the sample returned the questionnaire. It is difficult to predict the effect of incomplete returns, but it must be recognized as a limitation on the results.

The Population

Principals. All the principals of those elementary or elementary-junior high schools of the Edmonton public school system which were known to be using a program of scheduled parent-teacher interviews for any of their elementary classes during the 1968-69 school year.

Teachers. Those elementary school teachers of the Edmonton public school system who were involved with scheduled parent-teacher interviews during the 1968-69 school year.

Parents. Those parents of elementary school pupils of the Edmonton public school system who were involved with scheduled parent-teacher interviews during the 1968-69 school year.

The Sample

Principals. All of the seventy principals in the

population were asked to respond to the questionnaire.

Teachers. A random sample of the teachers involved was used. After assigning a number to each teacher involved, a table of random numbers was used to select the members of the sample. Since the lists of teachers' names were subject to inaccuracies due to staff changes and for other reasons, questionnaires were sent to a number of teachers equal to about 120 percent of the number of principals. Eighty-five questionnaires were sent to teachers.

Parents. A random sample of parents involved was used. The members of this sample were chosen by taking another random sample of the teachers involved. Then one choice was made from the list of each of these teacher's pupils using another random number. The questionnaire was addressed to "the parent of" the particular child. Since some of the parents contacted would not have taken the opportunity to attend the scheduled parent-teacher interviews, questionnaires were sent to a number of parents equal to about 150 percent of the number of teachers. Questionnaires were sent to 125 parents.

The Questionnaire

A copy of the questionnaire appears in the Appendix section of this thesis.

Variables. The variables were chosen to follow the plan of problems listed above. The main problem,

that of measuring effectiveness of parent-teacher interviews, was approached in two ways:

(1) by asking the participants of the interviews to give a general rating of effectiveness on a five-point scale.

(2) by providing a list of purposes of interviews which were adapted from items used by Martin (1964) in her questionnaire, but with one addition from the literature. Recent literature continues to give strong support to this list of purposes. This list was used, first, to establish which purposes were perceived by the participants to be important, and to what extent. Then the same list was used again to measure the extent to which the established purposes had been achieved. For each purpose, responses were made on a five-point scale. This is the list of purposes which was provided.

(a) To inform parents about their child's progress or lack of it.

(b) To increase the teacher's understanding of the pupil's behavior, background, attitudes, etc., through information given by the parents.

(c) To allow parents and the teacher to become acquainted with each other so as to establish a cooperative relationship.

(d) To interpret the school to the parents, so as to create harmony between the school and the community.

(e) To allow parents and teacher to plan together

to help the child reach his maximum development.

(f) To discuss special concerns of the parents and/or teacher.

(g) To allow parents to find out about the child's relationships with the other children and the teacher while at school.

The last part of the questionnaire asked for information on the number of interviews per year, the periods of the year used for interviews, the length of interviews, and the parts of the day used. The information was used in order to identify those mechanics of interviews which were thought to be related to effectiveness. Additional questions in this section checked the grade involvement of the participants, measured the percentage involvement of the parents, and asked which parent or parents attended the interviews.

Reliability and validity. For the most part, the items of the questionnaire were considered to have face validity. However, the validity of the list of purposes of interviews was tested further by the presence of blank spaces which allowed the respondents to add any other purposes they considered to be important. The space provided at the end of the questionnaire for other suggestions regarding the effectiveness of parent-teacher interviews acted as a check on the validity of the study generally. The reliability of the instrument was not tested.

Make-up of the questionnaire. A single questionnaire was used for principals, teachers, and parents; but some questions regarding mechanics of interviews were to be used by only one of these three groups.

Data Collection

Preliminary information. A preliminary letter with a stamped, self-addressed return post card was sent to each principal of an Edmonton public elementary or elementary-junior high school during late April, 1969. The return card asked whether a program of scheduled parent-teacher interviews was being used for elementary classes during the 1968-69 school year; if so, for which classes; and, as a matter of interest, if the school was using the new experimental report card.

Questionnaires. Questionnaires were mailed individually to each principal, teacher, or parent in the sample. A cover letter was included, as well as a stamped, self-addressed envelope for the return of the questionnaire. Anonymity was assured. The questionnaire had no identification of the respondent other than the designation as principal, teacher, or parent.

Reminder card. In order to improve the return of questionnaires from teachers and parents, a reminder card was sent to all members of the sample of those two groups.

TREATMENT OF DATA

Part A (Part C of the Questionnaire)--General Rating of Effectiveness

In this section, data treatment was carried out separately for each of the three groups of participants. Scores from one to five were assigned to each of the five responses. A percentage frequency distribution of the responses on the one-to-five scale was tabulated. On the same table, a mean score was listed for each of the three groups of participants. This mean score was provided to indicate the general tendency of the responses.

Part B (Part A of the Questionnaire)--Perceived Purposes

The respondents' ratings on the one-to-five scale were used as scores of perceived importance of each of the listed purposes. For each group of participants, separately, the results were tabulated on a percentage frequency basis. A mean score was calculated for each purpose, as an indication of its relative importance. Other purposes, which were listed by respondents in the spaces provided on the questionnaire, were examined and listed. These were given consideration as an indication of the validity of the original list of purposes.

Part C (Part B of the Questionnaire)--Purposes Achieved

The respondents' ratings on the one-to-five scale were used as scores indicating the extent of the achievement of purposes. For each group of participants,

separately, the results were tabulated on a percentage frequency basis. A mean score was tabulated for each purpose, as an indication of achievement of purposes. These results were considered to be one of the two indicators of effectiveness of parent-teacher interviews.

Part D--Between-Group Differences in the Measurements of Effectiveness

Hypotheses. Null hypotheses were developed to test for significant between-group differences in the measurements of effectiveness, since the use of directional hypotheses was not possible. This approach was considered to be exploratory, so that the rejection of any one of the null hypotheses would be taken as reason to explore further. Following is a statement of the hypotheses which were formulated.

Hypothesis 1.1. There is no significant difference between principals and teachers in their general rating of effectiveness of parent-teacher interviews.

Hypothesis 1.2. There is no significant difference between principals and parents in their general rating of effectiveness of parent-teacher interviews.

Hypothesis 1.3. There is no significant difference between teachers and parents in their general rating of effectiveness of parent-teacher interviews.

Hypothesis 2.1. There is no significant difference between principals and teachers in their ratings of perceived importance of the purposes of parent-teacher interviews.

Hypothesis 2.2. There is no significant difference between principals and parents in their ratings of perceived importance of the purposes of parent-teacher interviews.

Hypothesis 2.3. There is no significant difference between teachers and parents in their ratings of perceived importance of the purposes of parent-teacher interviews.

Hypothesis 3.1. There is no significant difference between principals and teachers in their ratings of achievement of purposes of parent-teacher interviews.

Hypothesis 3.2. There is no significant difference between principals and parents in their ratings of achievement of purposes of parent-teacher interviews.

Hypothesis 3.3. There is no significant difference between teachers and parents in their ratings of achievement of purposes of parent-teacher interviews.

Testing these hypotheses. These hypotheses were tested using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Two Sample Test (Siegel, 1956, pp. 127-136, 270). Computations for this statistical

test were effected with the IBM 360/67 computer at the University of Alberta, using a computer program of the Division of Educational Research Services. This program was titled "NONPO1, Kolmogorov-Smirnov:Two Sample Test." An alpha level of .05 was chosen as indicating a significant difference.

Part E (Part D of the Questionnaire)--Mechanics of Interviews

Question 1. This question asked with which grade or grades the respondent had participated in parent-teacher interviews during the 1968-69 school year. The responses were tabulated as a percentage frequency distribution. The results were examined in order to check the degree of involvement with each of the grades of the three groups of participants.

Question 2. The three parts of this question, dealing with the number of interviews per year, were used to arrive at "indications of favor" regarding the optimum number. For those who were satisfied with the number they had experienced, that number was used as an "indication of favor." For those who were dissatisfied with the number of times, their suggestion for the best number of times was used as the "indication of favor." The frequencies were converted to percentage frequencies for tabulation. The total "indications of favor," at the bottom of the table, provided a visual identification of the number of times

considered to promote effectiveness by each of the three groups of participants.

In order to make comparisons among the three groups of participants, a null hypothesis of no significant difference among the three groups was formulated and tested using the chi square test (Ferguson, 1966, pp. 191-213). The .05 level of significance was used. The hypothesis was stated thus:

Hypothesis 4. There is no significant difference among the three groups of participants in their total "indications of favor" regarding the number of interviews per year.

Question 3. The three parts of this question, dealing with the periods of the year used, were used to arrive at "indications of favor" regarding the best periods. For those who were satisfied with the periods they had experienced, those periods were used as an "indication of favor." For those who were dissatisfied with the periods they had experienced, their suggestions for better periods were used as the "indication of favor." The frequencies were converted to percentage frequencies for tabulation. The total "indication of favor," at the bottom of the table, provided a visual identification of the periods considered to promote effectiveness by each of the three groups of participants.

In order to make comparisons among the three

groups of participants, a null hypothesis of no significant difference among the three groups was formulated and tested using the chi square test (Ferguson, 1966, pp. 191-213). The .05 level of significance was used. The hypothesis was stated thus:

Hypothesis 5. There is no significant difference among the three groups of participants in their total "indications of favor" regarding the periods of the year used.

Question 4. The three parts of this question, dealing with the length of time per interview, were used to arrive at "indications of favor" regarding the optimum length of time. For those who were satisfied with the length of the interview(s) they had experienced, that length of time was used as an "indication of favor." For those who were dissatisfied with the length of the interview(s), their suggestion for a better length of time was used as the "indication of favor." The frequencies were converted to percentage frequencies for tabulation. The total "indications of favor," at the bottom of the table, provided a visual identification of the length of time per interview considered to promote effectiveness by each of the three groups of participants.

In order to make comparisons among the three groups of participants, a null hypothesis of no significant difference among the three groups was formulated and tested using the chi square test (Ferguson, 1966, pp. 191-213).

The .05 level of significance was used. The hypothesis was stated thus:

Hypothesis 6. There is no significant difference among the three groups of participants in their total "indications of favor" regarding the length of interviews.

Question 5. The three parts of this question, dealing with the parts of the day used for interviews, were used to arrive at "indications of favor" regarding those times of the day most convenient for parents. For those who were satisfied that the times they had experienced were convenient for parents, those times were used as an "indication of favor." For those who were dissatisfied that the times experienced were convenient for parents, their suggestions for more convenient times were used as the "indications of favor." The frequencies were converted to percentage frequencies for tabulation. The total "indications of favor," at the bottom of the table, provided a visual identification of the times of the day considered by each of the three groups of participants to be most convenient for parents. Again, this was considered as a factor promoting the effectiveness of the interviews.

In order to make comparisons among the three groups of participants, a null hypothesis of no significant difference among the three groups was formulated and tested using the chi square test (Ferguson,

1966, pp. 191-231). The .05 level of significance was used. The hypothesis was stated thus:

Hypothesis 7. There is no significant difference among the three groups of participants in their total "indications of favor" regarding the parts of the day used for interviews.

Question 6. This question was to be answered by parents only. The results of this question, regarding which parent attended the interview(s), were tabulated as percentage frequencies. These results were compared with those of Question 8 which was answered by teachers only.

Question 7. This question was to be answered by teachers only. The results of this question, which asked what percentage of pupils were represented at parent-teacher interviews, were tabulated as percentage frequencies. The results of this question were used to check the real involvement of parents in parent-teacher interviews.

Question 8. This question also was to be answered by teachers only. The results of this question, regarding the percentage of interviews at which both parents were present, were tabulated as percentage frequencies. These results were compared with those of Question 6 which was answered by parents only.

Question 9. Respondents were asked to list any other suggestions they wished to make for the improvement of parent-teacher interviews. The results of this exploratory item were listed and considered as a check of the validity of this study.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Questionnaire Returns

Principals. Of the seventy questionnaires sent to principals, sixty-six were returned. This was a return of ninety-four percent.

Teachers. Of the eighty-five questionnaires sent to teachers, fifty-nine were returned. This was a return of sixty-nine percent. One questionnaire had a notation explaining that the teacher had left the staff, leaving fifty-eight usable questionnaires.

Parents. Of the 125 questionnaires sent to parents, seventy-four, or fifty-nine percent, were returned. Of these, fifty-seven were from parents who had attended parent teacher interviews and who had completed usable questionnaires.

PART A--GENERAL RATING OF EFFECTIVENESS

Percentage frequency distribution. Table 1 shows the percentage frequency distribution of the responses of the three groups of participants on the general rating of effectiveness. The range of scores was from 1, "exceedingly valuable and effective"; to 5, "of no value"; with a neutral

Table 1

General Rating of Effectiveness of
Parent-Teacher Interviews

Score	Percentage frequency distribution					Mean Score
	Exceedingly valuable and effective	Very valuable and effective	Undecided	Of little value; relatively ineffective	Of no value	
	1	2	3	4	5	
Principals	37.88	57.58	4.55	0	0	1.67
Teachers	22.41	70.69	5.17	1.72	0	1.86
Parents	26.32	61.40	5.26	7.02	0	1.93

mid-point at 3, "undecided." Well over fifty percent of all three groups chose score 2, "very valuable and effective"; with the next highest percentage for score 1. This in itself is a clear indication of the pronounced weight of opinion towards parent-teacher interviews being effective.

Mean scores. The mean scores of 1.67 for principals, 1.86 for teachers, and 1.93 for parents (right column of Table 1) bear out the previous conclusion, since they all indicate an average opinion more favorable than that of score 2.

PART B--PERCEIVED PURPOSES

Percentage Frequency Distribution and Mean Score

Tables 2, 3, and 4 show the percentage frequency distributions of the responses regarding scores of perceived importance of each of the listed purposes, for each of the three groups of participants respectively. The range of scores was from 1, "extremely important," to 5, "unimportant"; with a neutral mid-point at 3, "undecided."

A mean score for each purpose, appearing in the right column of each of the three tables, is an indication of the average opinion of the particular group of participants regarding the perceived importance of that purpose.

Principals. Table 2 shows that the responses of principals regarding scores of perceived importance of purposes were largely in the two top

Table 2

Perceived Importance of Purposes of Parent-Teacher
Interviews--Principals' Responses

	Percentage frequency distribution					Mean Score
	Extremely important	Very important	Undecided	Not very important	Un- important	
Score	1	2	3	4	5	
Purpose:						
(a) To inform parents about their child's progress or lack of it.	46.97	50.00	1.52	1.52	0	1.58
(b) To increase the teacher's understanding of the pupil's behavior, background, attitudes, etc., through information given by the parents.	57.58	40.91	0	1.52	0	1.45
(c) To allow parents and the teacher to become acquainted with each other so as to establish a cooperative relationship.	37.88	60.61	1.52	0	0	1.64
(d) To interpret the school to the parents, so as to create harmony between the school and the community.	22.73	66.67	9.09	1.52	0	1.89

Table 2 (continued)

	Percentage frequency distribution					Mean Score
	Extremely important	Very important	Undecided	Not very important	Un- important	
Score	1	2	3	4	5	
(e) To allow parents and teacher to plan together to help the child reach his maximum development.	30.30	59.09	7.58	3.03	0	1.83
(f) To discuss special concerns of the parents and/or teacher.	40.91	45.45	9.09	4.55	0	1.77
(g) To allow parents to find out about the child's relationships with other children and the teacher while at school.	18.18	60.61	12.12	9.09	0	2.12

Table 3

Perceived Importance of Purposes of Parent-Teacher Interviews--Teachers' Responses

	Percentage frequency distribution					Mean Score
	Extremely important	Very important	Undecided	Not very important	Unimportant	
Score	1	2	3	4	5	
Purpose:						
(a) To inform parents about their child's progress or lack of it.	56.90	34.48	1.72	6.90	0	1.59
(b) To increase the teacher's understanding of the pupil's behavior, background, attitudes, etc., through information given by the parents.	58.62	39.66	1.72	0	0	1.43
(c) To allow parents and the teacher to become acquainted with each other so as to establish a cooperative relationship.	25.86	68.97	5.17	0	0	1.79
(d) To interpret the school to the parents, so as to create harmony between the school and the community.	24.14	56.90	15.52	1.72	1.72	2.00

Table 3 (continued)

	Percentage frequency distribution					Mean Score
	Extremely important	Very important	Undecided	Not very important	Un- important	
Score	1	2	3	4	5	
(e) To allow parents and teacher to plan together to help the child reach his maximum development.	37.93	51.27	10.34	0	0	1.72
(f) To discuss special concerns of the parents and/or teacher.	34.48	56.90	1.72	3.45	3.45	1.84
(g) To allow parents to find out about the child's relationships with other children and the teacher while at school.	22.41	63.79	6.90	5.17	1.72	2.00

Table 4

Perceived Importance of Purposes of Parent-Teacher Interviews--Parents' Responses

Score	Percentage frequency distribution					Mean Score
	Extremely important	Very important	Undecided	Not very important	Unimportant	
	1	2	3	4	5	
Purpose:						
(a) To inform parents about their child's progress or lack of it.	71.93	26.32	1.76	0	0	1.30
(b) To increase the teacher's understanding of the pupil's behavior, background, attitudes, etc., through information given by the parents.	49.12	45.61	1.76	1.76	1.76	1.61
(c) To allow parents and the teacher to become acquainted with each other so as to establish a cooperative relationship.	19.30	63.16	8.77	8.77	0	2.07
(d) To interpret the school to the parents, so as to create harmony between the school and the community.	12.28	50.88	17.54	17.54	1.76	2.46

Table 4 (continued)

	Percentage frequency distribution					Mean Score
	Extremely important	Very important	Undecided	Not very important	Un- important	
Score	1	2	3	4	5	
(e) To allow parents and teacher to plan together to help the child reach his maximum development.	49.12	45.61	3.51	1.76	0	1.58
(f) To discuss special concerns of the parents and/or teacher.	49.12	43.86	3.51	3.51	0	1.61
(g) To allow parents to find out about the child's relationships with other children and the teacher while at school.	31.58	63.16	1.76	3.51	0	1.77

categories--1, "extremely important," and 2, "very important"--for all of the purposes listed. The mean scores of principals for the seven purposes listed ranged from 1.45 to 2.12 which were very much on the side of being important. These results show clearly that the principals as a group considered all of the listed purposes to be of definite importance, although an examination of Table 2 does tend to indicate some minor differences in the degree of importance of the various purposes.

Teachers. Table 3 on page 35 shows that the responses of teachers regarding scores of perceived importance of purposes were also largely in the two top categories--1, "extremely important," and 2, "very important"--for all the purposes listed. The mean scores of teachers for the seven purposes listed ranged from 1.43 to 2.00 which were also very much on the side of being important. These results show clearly that the teachers as a group considered all of the listed purposes to be of definite importance, although an examination of Table 3 does tend to indicate some minor difference in the degree of importance of the various purposes.

Parents. Table 4 on page 37 shows that the responses of parents regarding scores of perceived importance of purposes were also largely in the two top categories--1, "extremely important," and 2, "very important"--for all of the purposes listed, except for purpose (d), "to interpret

the school to the parents so as to create harmony between the school and the community." However, even for purpose (d), 63.16 percent were in categories 1 or 2, with 17.54 percent in each of categories 3 and 4. The mean score for purpose (d) was 2.46, which is still clearly on the "important" side of the mid-point. The range of mean scores for the other six purposes was from 1.30 to 2.07--again clearly on the side of being important. Parents as a group appeared to consider all the purposes as important, with the minor qualification mentioned above, although an examination of Table 4 does indicate some minor differences in the degree of importance of the various purposes.

Other Perceived Purposes

The other important perceived purposes listed by respondents in the spaces provided were considered as a test of the validity of the list of purposes provided. Following are lists of those which appeared on questionnaires.

Those listed by principals. Each of the following "other purposes" appeared on one of the questionnaires returned by a principal:

(1) To interpret programs, curriculum, and testing to parents.

(2) To reduce tension.

(3) To train parents in curriculum.

(4) To establish a more humane channel of communication--two-way.

(5) To discuss and display quality of work acceptable or appropriate for his or her level.

(6) To discover potential resource personnel within the community.

(7) To prevent parents and teachers from pressuring children.

(8) To help children develop self-confidence.

(9) To set realistic goals for the child.

(10) To establish lines of communication between home and school.

(11) To improve public relations.

(12) To establish a positive attitude in the parent toward the pupil and school.

Those listed by teachers. Each of the following appeared on one of the questionnaires returned by a teacher:

(1) To enlist the help of parents in planning work for children who are having difficulties.

(2) To establish attitude of parent toward child--hostile, permissive, understanding, etc.

(3) To allow pupils to feel parents and teachers are working together.

(4) To discuss and interpret school's philosophy.

(5) Discuss student work (i.e., notebook organization).

(6) To demonstrate to the child that there exists between his parents and the teacher a relationship of

friendly understanding and a common and continued interest in his welfare.

(7) Interpret the report card.

Those listed by parents. Each of the following appeared on one of the questionnaires returned by a parent.

(1) To inform teacher of relationship between mother and father.

(2) To know the personality of the teacher.

(3) To show the teachers that the parents are interested.

(4) To allow parents to participate in some school activity.

(5) To discuss physical handicaps such as bad eyesight or deafness.

(6) To discuss the child's work habits.

(7) To allow teacher to make suggestions regarding parental assistance.

(8) To give child more confidence since the parents have met the teacher.

(9) To explain new programs used at school.

Conclusion regarding validity. The investigator felt that the basic ideas of many of these "other purposes" were included in the ideas presented by the list of purposes provided, or that the "other purpose" was in many cases an extension of one of the purposes provided. The results of

this section provided no real challenge to the validity of the list provided.

PART C--PURPOSES ACHIEVED

Percentage Frequency Distribution and Mean Score

Tables 5, 6, and 7 show the percentage frequency distribution of the responses. These responses were regarded as scores indicating the extent of the achievement of each of the listed purposes. They are given for each of the three groups of participants respectively. The range of scores was from 1, "very satisfactorily achieved," to 5, "failed in this regard;" with a neutral mid-point at 3, "undecided."

A mean score for each purpose, appearing in the right column of each of the three tables, is an indication of the average opinion of the particular group of participants regarding the achievement of that purpose.

Principals. Table 5 shows that the responses of principals regarding scores of achievement of purposes were largely in categories 1, "very satisfactorily achieved," 2, "achieved," or 3, "undecided," for all of the listed purposes. The percentages of responses in categories 4, "hardly achieved," and 5, "failed in this regard," were never greater than seven percent. While there was some noticeable degree of indecision, the bulk of the support was clearly on the side of satisfactory achievement of purposes in general. The mean scores of principals for the seven purposes ranged

Table 5

Achievement of Purposes of Parent-Teacher Interviews--Principals' Responses

Percentage frequency distribution						Mean Score
	Very satisfactorily achieved	Achieved	Undecided	Hardly achieved	Failed in this regard	
Score	1	2	3	4	5	
Purpose:						
(a)	To inform parents about their child's progress or lack of it.					
	43.94	53.03	1.52	1.52	0	1.61
(b)	To increase the teacher's understanding of the pupil's behavior, background, attitudes, etc., through information given by the parents.					
	21.21	72.73	3.03	3.03	0	1.88
(c)	To allow parents and the teacher to become acquainted with each other so as to establish a cooperative relationship.					
	15.15	63.67	19.70	1.52	0	2.08
(d)	To interpret the school to the parents, so as to create harmony between the school and the community.					
	4.55	51.52	37.88	6.06	0	2.45

Table 5 (continued)

Percentage frequency distribution					
	Very satisfac- torily achieved	Achieved	Undecided	Hardly achieved	Failed in this regard
Score	1	2	3	4	5
(e) To allow parents and teacher to plan together to help the child reach his maximum development.	1.52	59.09	31.82	6.06	1.52
(f) To discuss special concerns of the parents and/or teacher.	25.76	66.67	6.06	1.52	0
(g) To allow parents to find out about the child's relationships with other children and the teacher while at school.	4.55	68.18	24.24	3.03	0
					2.26

Table 6

Achievement of Purposes of Parent-Teacher
Interviews--Teacher's Responses

		Percentage frequency distribution					Mean Score
		Very satisfac- torily achieved	Achieved	Undecided	Hardly achieved	Failed in this regard	
Score		1	2	4	4	5	
Purpose:							
(a) To inform parents about their child's progress or lack of it.							
		29.31	62.07	5.17	1.72	1.72	1.84
(b) To increase the teacher's understanding of the pupil's behavior background, attitudes, etc., through information given by the parents.							
		24.14	65.52	10.34	0	0	1.86
(c) To allow parents and the teacher to become acquainted with each other so as to establish a cooperative relationship.							
		10.34	67.24	13.79	8.62	0	2.21
(d) To interpret the school to the parents, so as to create harmony.							
		6.90	50.00	29.31	12.07	1.72	2.52

Table 6 (continued)

Percentage frequency distribution					
	Very satisfac- torily achieved	Achieved	Undecided	Hardly achieved	Failed in this regard
Score	1	2	3	4	5
Purpose:					
(e) To allow parents and teacher to plan together to help the child reach his maximum development.	5.17	46.55	32.76	15.52	0
					2.59
(f) To discuss special concerns of the parents and/or teacher.	18.97	67.24	8.62	3.45	1.72
					2.02
(g) To allow parents to find out about the child's relationships with other children and the teacher while at school.	3.45	60.34	27.59	8.62	3.45
					2.41

Table 7

Achievement of Purposes of Parent-Teacher
Interviews--Parent's Responses

		Percentage frequency distribution					Mean Score
		Very satisfac- torily achieved	Achieved	Undecided	Hardly achieved	Failed in this regard	
Score		1	2	3	4	5	
Purpose:							
(a)	To inform parents about their child's progress or lack of it.	41.07	51.79	1.79	3.57	1.79	1.73
(b)	To increase the teacher's understanding of the pupil's behavior, background, attitudes, etc., through information given by the parents.	28.57	44.64	17.86	8.93	0	2.07
(c)	To allow parents and the teacher to become acquainted with each other so as to establish a cooperative relationship.	19.64	57.14	14.29	7.14	1.79	2.14
(d)	To interpret the school to the parents, so as to create harmony between the school and the community.	1.79	50.00	41.07	3.57	3.57	2.57

Table 7 (continued)

Percentage frequency distribution					
	Very satisfac- torily achieved	Achieved	Undecided	Hardly achieved	Failed in this regard
Score	1	2	3	4	5
Purpose:					
(e) To allow parents and teacher to plan together to help the child reach his maximum development.	19.64	42.86	21.43	10.71	5.36
					2.39
(f) To discuss special concerns of the parents and/or teacher.	19.64	58.93	14.29	7.14	0
					2.09
(g) To allow parents to find out about the child's relationships with other children and the teacher while at school.	21.43	60.71	10.71	5.36	1.79
					2.05

from 1.61 to 2.47, which were all well on the side of satisfactory achievement of purposes. Principals as a group clearly considered that the listed purposes of parent-teacher interviews were achieved, although an examination of Table 5 does tend to indicate some minor differences in the degree of achievement of the various purposes.

Teachers. Table 6 on page 36 shows that the responses of teachers regarding scores of achievement purposes were largely in categories 1, "very satisfactorily achieved," and 2, "achieved," with some relatively high values in category 3, "undecided." The percentages of responses in categories 4, "hardly achieved," and 5, "failed in this regard," can be seen to be relatively low. Again, the bulk of the support was clearly on the side of satisfactory achievement of purposes in general. The mean scores of teachers for the seven purposes ranged from 1.84 to 2.59, which were all well on the side of satisfactory achievement of purposes. Teachers as a group clearly considered that the listed purposes of parent-teacher interviews were achieved, although an examination of Table 6 does tend to indicate some minor differences in the degree of achievement of the various purposes.

Parents. Table 7 on page 48 shows that the responses of parents regarding scores of achievement of purposes were also largely in categories 1, "very satisfactorily achieved," and 2, "achieved;" with some relatively high values in category 3, "undecided." The percentages of responses in

categories 4, "hardly achieved," and 5 "failed in this regard," can be seen to be relatively low. Again, the bulk of the support was clearly on the side of satisfactory achievement of purposes in general. The mean scores of parents for the seven purposes ranged from 1.61 to 2.47, which were all well on the side of satisfactory achievement of purposes. Parents as a group clearly considered that the listed purposes of parent-teacher interviews were achieved, although an examination of Table 7 does tend to indicate some minor differences in the degree of achievement of the various purposes.

PART D--BETWEEN-GROUP DIFFERENCES IN THE MEASUREMENTS OF EFFECTIVENESS

Testing the Hypotheses

Kolmogorov-Smirnov Values. In order to interpret the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Two Sample Test (Siegel, 1956, pp. 127-136, 279), critical values of "D" had to be calculated. For the .05 level of significance, a formula was given in Siegel (1956, pp. 131, 279) for the "value of 'D' so large as to call for rejection of [the null hypothesis]" This was:

$$1.36 \sqrt{\frac{n_1 + n_2}{n_1 n_2}}$$

Critical values of "D" were calculated for each combination of two groups of participants, as can be seen on Table 8. A comparison of the observed values of "D" with the calculated

Table 8
Calculated Critical Values of D for the
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Two Sample Test

Between groups	N_1	N_2	D
Principals and Teachers	66	58	0.2448
Principals and Parents	66	57	0.2462
Teachers and Parents	58	57	0.2530

critical values of "D" allowed the nine null hypotheses of this part, which had been formulated to test for significant between-group differences in the previous measurements of effectiveness, to be tested.

Hypothesis 1.1 "There is no significant difference between principals and teachers in their general rating of effectiveness of parent-teacher interviews." Table 9 shows an observed value of "D" for these two groups of participants to be 0.155, which does not exceed, or even approach, the critical value of 0.2448 (Table 8, page 52). Since there was not sufficient reason to reject the null hypothesis, it was accepted.

Hypothesis 1.2. "There is no significant difference between principals and parents in their general rating of effectiveness of parent-teacher interviews." Table 9 shows an observed value of "D" for these two groups of participants to be 0.116, which did not exceed, or even approach, the critical value of 0.2462 (Table 8, page 52). Since there was not sufficient reason to reject the null hypothesis, it was accepted.

Hypothesis 1.3. "There is no significant difference between principals and parents in their general rating of effectiveness of parent-teacher interviews." Table 9 shows an observed value of "D" for these two groups of participants to be 0.054, which did not exceed, or even approach, the critical value of 0.2530 (Table 8, page 52).

Table 9
Between-Group Differences of the General Rating of
Effectiveness of Parent-Teacher Interviews

Between groups	Observed values of D in the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test
Principals and Teachers	0.155*
Principals and Parents	0.116*
Teachers and Parents	0.054*

*None of these observed values of D indicates a significant difference at the .05 level of significance.

Since there was not sufficient reason to reject the null hypothesis, it was accepted.

Hypothesis 2.1. "There is no significant difference between principals and teachers in their ratings of perceived importance of the purposes of parent-teacher interviews." Table 10 shows observed values of "D" for the seven purposes to be 0.099, 0.015, 0.120, 0.084, 0.076, and 0.074 respectively. Since these values did not exceed, or even approach, the critical value of 0.2448 (Table 8, page 52), there was not sufficient reason to reject the null hypothesis for any of the purposes, so it was accepted for all seven of them.

Hypothesis 2.2. "There is no significant difference between principals and parents in their ratings of perceived importance of the purposes of parent-teacher interviews." In Table 10, the observed values of "D" for five of the seven purposes were much less than the critical value of 0.2462. (Table 8, page 52). These were: Purpose (b)--0.085, Purpose (c)--0.186, Purpose (e)--0.188, Purpose (f)--0.082 and Purpose (g)--0.159. For these purposes, then, there was not sufficient reason to reject the null hypothesis, so the null hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted. Observed values of "D" did exceed the critical value of 0.2462 in the case of two of the purposes. For Purpose (a), "to inform parents about their child's progress or lack of it," the observed value of "D" was 0.250. For Purpose (d), "to interpret the school to the parents, so as to create

Table 10
Between-Group Differences of Perceived Importance of
Purposes of Parent-Teacher Interviews

Purpose	Observed values of D in the Kolmogorov Smirnov test		
	Between principals and teachers	Between principals and parents	Between teachers and parents
(a)	0.099	0.250*	0.150
(b)	0.015	0.085	0.095
(c)	0.120	0.186	0.124
(d)	0.084	0.262*	0.179
(e)	0.076	0.188	0.112
(f)	0.064	0.082	0.146
(g)	0.074	0.159	0.092

*These values indicate a significant difference at the .05 level of significance.

harmony between the school and the community," the observed value of "D" was 0.262. Since these two values indicate significant differences at the .05 level, the null hypothesis for Purposes (a) and (d) was rejected.

Examination for the cause of the null hypothesis rejection. Regarding the perceived importance of Purpose (a) by principals and by parents, Table 2 on page 33 shows that principals had a mean score of 1.58 and Table 6 on page 46 shows that parents had a mean score of 1.30. Since the above statistic indicated a significant difference between these two scores, the resulting conclusion was that while both groups of participants considered Purpose (a) to have a high perceived importance, parents considered it to be even more important than did principals. It is obvious that parents considered this purpose, "to inform parents about their child's progress or lack of it," to be very important.

Regarding the perceived importance of Purpose (d) by principals and by parents, Table 2 on page 33 shows that principals had a mean score of 1.89 and Table 4 on page 37 shows that parents had a mean score of 2.46. Since a score of two stood for "very important" and a score of three stood for "undecided," it appeared that the significant difference lay in the fact that for Purpose (d), "to interpret the school to the parents, so as to create harmony between the school and the community," principals as a group considered this to be clearly in the area of importance,

whereas parents as a group tended towards the area of being undecided regarding that purpose.

Hypothesis 2.3. "There is no significant difference between teachers and parents in their ratings of perceived importance of the purposes of parent-teacher interviews." Table 10 on page 56 shows observed values of "D" for the seven purposes to be 0.150, 0.095, 0.124, 0.179, 0.112, 0.146, and 0.092 respectively. Since these values did not exceed, or even approach, the critical value of 0.2530 (Table 8, page 52, there was not sufficient reason to reject the null hypothesis for any of the purposes, so it was accepted for all seven of them.

Hypothesis 3.1. "There is no significant difference between principals and teachers in their ratings of achievement of purposes of parent-teacher interviews," Table 11 shows observed values of "D" for achievement of purposes for principals and teachers to be for the seven purposes, respectively: 0.146, 0.043, 0.071, 0.077, 0.089, 0.068, and 0.089. Since none of these values exceeded, or even approached, the critical value of 0.2448 (Table 8, page 52), there was not sufficient reason to reject the null hypothesis for any of the purposes, so it was accepted for all seven of them.

Hypothesis 3.2. "There is no significant difference between principals and parents in their ratings of achievement of purposes of parent-teacher interviews." Table 11 shows observed values of "D" for achievement of purposes for

Table 11
Between-Group Differences Regarding Achievement of
Purposes of Parent-Teacher Interviews

Purpose	Observed values of D in the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test*		
	Between principals and teachers	Between principals and parents	Between teachers and parents
(a)	0.146	0.041	0.118
(b)	0.043	0.207	0.164
(c)	0.071	0.074	0.093
(d)	0.077	0.043	0.067
(e)	0.089	0.181	0.145
(f)	0.068	0.139	0.076
(g)	0.089	0.169	0.183

*None of the observed values of D in this table indicates a significant difference at the .05 level of significance.

principals and parents to be for the seven purposes, respectively: 0.041, 0.207, 0.074, 0.043, 0.181, 0.139, and 0.169. Since none of these values exceeded the critical value of 0.2462 (Table 8, page 52), there was not sufficient reason to reject the null hypothesis for any of the purposes, so it was accepted for all seven of them.

Hypothesis 3.3. "There is no significant difference between teachers and parents in their ratings of achievement of purposes of parent-teacher interviews." Table 11 on page 59 shows observed values of "D" for achievement of purposes for teachers and parents to be for the seven purposes, respectively: 0.118, 0.164, 0.093, 0.067, 0.145, 0.076, and 0.183. Since none of these values exceeded, or even approached, the critical value of 0.2530 (Table 8, page 52), there was not sufficient reason to reject the null hypothesis for any of the purposes, so it was accepted for all seven of them.

PART E--MECHANICS OF INTERVIEWS

Question 1

The results from this question, which asked with which grade or grades the respondent had participated in parent-teacher interviews during the 1968-69 school year, are given as percentage frequencies in Table 12. These percentage frequencies were calculated on the basis of the number of respondents in each group; not the number of responses. Any individual respondent could have responded for only one of the grades, or for any number of grades up

Table 12

The Grade or Grades With Which Respondents
Had Been Involved

Grades	Percentage frequencies*					
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Principals N=65	90.8	89.2	89.2	90.8	94.0	95.4
Teachers N=58	19.0	29.4	27.6	24.2	19.0	15.5
Parents N=57	33.4	33.4	28.1	22.8	26.3	24.6

*Any individual could have responded for only one of the grades, or for any number of grades up to the total of six. Each percentage is to be read as a percentage of the total number of respondents.

to the maximum of six. This meant that any of the percentage frequencies of Table 12 could be read as that percentage of the total number of respondents.

Principals. Table 12 shows that the percentage frequencies for principals, by grades, were all above eighty-nine percent, which indicated that the principals who responded were, as a group, much involved with interviews in all of the six elementary grades.

Teachers. Table 12 shows that the percentage frequencies for teachers, who would each probably be involved with one or two grades, ranged from 15.5 percent to 29.4 percent. This served as an indication that the teachers of this random sample were, as much as could be expected, a representative group of all the six elementary grades.

Parents. Table 12 shows that the percentage frequencies for parents, who would have been involved with one or two grades for the most part, ranged from 22.8 percent to 33.4 percent. Again, this served as an indication that the parents of this random sample were, as much as could be expected, a representative group for all the six elementary grades.

Question 2

Following the pattern described on page 24, the responses from members of the three groups of participants were used to arrive at percentage frequencies for total

"indications of favor" regarding the number of interviews per year.

Principals. Table 13 shows the percentage frequencies of "indications of favor" for principals regarding the number of interviews per year. The high percentage of 73.9 percent for two interviews per year was a clear indication of the feelings of principals as a group.

Teachers. Table 14 shows the percentage frequencies of "indications of favor" for teachers regarding the number of interviews per year. While the results were not so decisive as with principals, the 57.0 percent total for two interviews per year did indicate much stronger support by teachers for two interviews per year than for any other number.

Parents. Table 15 shows the percentage frequencies of "indications of favor" for parents regarding the number of interviews per year. The highest total percentage was 54.4 percent for two interviews per year, with a total percentage of 35.1 percent for three interviews per year. So while a majority of parents favored two interviews, a noticeable number were in favor of three interviews.

Among-group comparisons (testing Hypothesis 4). Two interviews per year was clearly the number favored by all three groups of participants. Hypothesis 4, "there is no significant difference among the three groups of participants

Table 13
 Principals' "Indications of Favor" Regarding
 the Number of Interviews
 Per Year

Number of opportunities for interviews provided	Percentage frequencies*			
	One	Two	Three	Four or more
Those satisfied with this number	10.8	38.5	3.1	1.5
Those dissatisfied according to their suggested alternative	0	35.4	7.7	3.1
Total "indications of favor"	10.8	73.9	10.8	4.6

*N=65

Table 14
 Teachers' "Indications of Favor" Regarding
 the Number of Interviews
 Per Year

Number of opportunities for interviews provided	Percentage frequencies*			
	One	Two	Three	Four or more
Those satisfied with this number	20.7	29.4	3.5	0
Those dissatisfied according to their suggested alternative	0	27.6	15.5	3.5
Total "indications of favor"	20.7	57.0	19.0	3.5

*N=58

Table 15
 Parents' "Indications of Favor" Regarding
 the Number of Interviews
 Per Year

Number of opportunities for interviews provided	Percentage frequencies*			
	One	Two	Three	Four or more
Those satisfied with this number	8.8	29.8	12.3	0
Those dissatisfied according to their suggested alternative	0	24.6	22.8	1.8
Total "indications of favor"	8.8	54.4	35.1	1.8

*N=57

in their total 'indications of favor' regarding the number of interviews per year," was tested using the chi square test. Table 16 gives the results of this test. Since the calculated chi square value of 15.43 exceeded the critical value for the .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. The expected and observed amounts of the various cells of Table 16 were examined for noteworthy differences. More teachers favored one interview per year than expected. While fewer principals than expected favored three interviews per year, more parents than expected favored that number. The strong support of all groups for two interviews per year was borne out by the results on this table.

Question 3

Following the pattern described on pages 25 and 26, the responses from members of the three groups of participants were used to arrive at percentage frequencies for total "indications of favor" regarding the best periods of the year used for parent-teacher interviews. In examining the tabulation of responses for this question, it should be noted that the total number of responses exceeded the number of respondents since many respondents made reference to more than one interview period. The percentage frequencies were based on the number of respondents, and should be read as a percentage of the total number of respondents.

Principals. Table 17 shows the percentage frequencies of "indications of favor" for principals regarding the periods

Table 16

Chi Square Value of the Among-Group Comparison
of "Indications of Favor" Regarding
the Number of Interviews
Per Year

Number of interviews	One	Two	Three	Four or more	Total
Principals	O=7 E=8.7	O=48 E=40.5	O=7** E=13.7	O=3 E=2.2	65
Teachers	O=12** E=7.7	O=33 E=36.1	O=11 E=12.2	O=2 E=1.9	58
Parents	O=5 E=7.6	O=31 E=36.0	O=20** E=12.0	O=1 E=1.9	57
Total	24	112	38	6	180

Chi Square (calculated) = 15.43*

Chi Square (critical value, significant at the .05 level)
= 12.59

*Calls for rejection of the null hypothesis.

**Noteworthy differences between observed and
expected frequencies.

Table 17

Principals' "Indications of Favor" Regarding
the Periods of the Year Used

Periods of the year	Percentage frequencies*				
	September- October	November- December	January- February	March- April	May- June
Those satisfied with the periods used	3.1	43.1	16.9	30.8	4.6
Those dissatisfied according to those they would prefer	13.8	23.1	13.8	26.1	3.1
Total "indications of favor"	16.9	66.2	30.8	57.0	7.7

*N=65, but the total number of responses exceed N. Each percentage is
to be read as a percentage of the total number of respondents.

of the year used for parent-teacher interviews. The strong support from principals went to the three middle-of-the-year periods, with 66.2 percent favoring November-December, 30.8 percent favoring January-February, and 57.0 per cent favoring March-April.

Teachers. Table 18 shows the percentage frequencies of "indications of favor" for teachers regarding the periods of the year used for parent-teacher interviews. The total percentage frequencies at the bottom of the table indicate that teachers favored the first four-periods--September-October, November-December, January-February, and March-April--to much the same degree, but they looked upon the final period, May-June, with much less favor.

Parents. Table 19 shows the percentage frequencies of "indications of favor" for parents regarding the periods of the year used for parent-teacher interviews. The total percentage frequencies at the bottom of the table indicate that, like the teachers, parents as a group favored the first four periods--September-October, November-December, January-February, and March-April--to much the same degree, but they also looked upon the final period, May-June, with much less favor.

Among-group comparisons (testing Hypothesis 5). None of the three groups of participants gave strong support to the May-June period for parent-teacher interviews. All three groups of participants gave strong support to all the other

Table 18

Teachers' "Indications of Favor" Regarding
the Periods of the Year Used

Periods of the year	Percentage frequencies*			
	September- October	November- December	January- February	March April May- June
Those satisfied with the periods used	10.3	27.6	15.5	22.4
Those dissatisfied according to those they would prefer	29.4	22.4	31.0	31.0
Total "indications of favor"	39.7	50.0	46.5	53.5

*N=58, but the total number of responses exceeded N. Each percentage is
to be read as a percentage of the total number of respondents.

Table 19

Parents' "Indications of Favor" Regarding
the Periods of the Year Used

Periods of the year	Percentage frequencies*				
	September- October	November- December	January- February	March- April	May- June
Those satisfied with the periods used	22.2	26.0	22.2	27.8	9.3
Those dissatisfied according to those they would prefer	22.2	26.0	26.0	26.0	5.6
Total "indications of favor"	44.5	52.0	48.1	53.8	14.8

*N=54, but the total number of responses exceeded N. Each percentage is
to be read as a percentage of the total number of respondents.

periods, except for principals who did not give strong support to September-October. Hypothesis 5, "there is no significant difference among the three groups of participants in their total 'indications of favor' regarding the periods of the year used," was tested using the chi square test on the frequencies of responses. Table 20 gives the results of this test. Since the calculated chi square value of 13.32 was less than the critical value for the .05 level of significance, there was not sufficient reason to reject the null hypothesis.

Question 4

Following the pattern described on pages 26 and 27, the responses from members of the three groups of participants were used to arrive at percentage frequencies for total "indications of favor" regarding the length of interviews.

Principals. Table 21 shows that 78.8 percent of the principals favored interviews of 11 to 20 minutes.

Teachers. Table 22 shows that 75.9 percent of the teachers favored interviews of 11 to 20 minutes.

Parents. Table 23 shows that 57.2 percent of the parents favored interviews of 11 to 20 minutes, with 26.8 percent favoring an interview time of 21 to 30 minutes.

Among-group comparisons (testing Hypothesis 6).

There was strong support from all three groups of participants

Table 20

Chi Square Value of the Among-Group Comparison
of "Indications of Favor" Regarding
the Periods of the Year Used

Periods of the year	September- October	November- December	January- February	March- April	May- June	Total*
Principals	0=11 E=19.5	0=43 E=33.6	0=20 E=24.6	0=37 E=32.6	0=5 E=5.7	116
Teachers	0=23 E=19.2	0=29 E=33.0	0=27 E=24.1	0=31 E=32.1	0=4 E=5.6	114
Parents	0=24 E=19.3	0=28 E=33.2	0=26 E=24.4	0=29 E=32.4	0=8 E=5.7	115
Total	58	100	73	97	17	345
Chi Square (calculated) = 13.32*						
Chi Square (critical value, significant at the .05 level) = 15.51						

*These totals are the total numbers of responses.

**Not sufficient reason to call for rejection of the null hypothesis.

Table 21
Principals' "Indications of Favor" Regarding
Length of Interviews

Length of interviews	Percentage frequencies*			
	10 minutes or less	11-20 minutes	21-30 minutes	over 30 minutes
Those satisfied that their allotted time was sufficient	9.1	71.2	4.5	0
Those dissatisfied according to their desired time	0	7.6	7.6	0
Total "indication of favor"	9.1	78.8	12.1	0

*N=66

Table 22
Teachers' "Indications of Favor" Regarding
Length of Interviews

Length of interviews	Percentage frequencies*			
	10 minutes or less	11-20 minutes	21-30 minutes	over 30 minutes
Those satisfied that their allotted time was sufficient	15.5	72.4	1.7	1.7
Those dissatisfied according to their desired time	0	3.5	5.2	0
Total "indications of favor"	15.5	75.9	6.9	1.7

*N=58

Table 23
Parents' "Indications of Favor" Regarding
Length of Interviews

Length of interviews	Percentage frequencies*			
	10 minutes or less	11-20 minutes	21-30 minutes	over 30 minutes
Those satisfied that their allotted time was sufficient	12.5	51.8	12.5	3.6
Those dissatisfied according to their desired time	0	5.4	14.3	0
Total "indications of favor"	12.5	57.2	26.8	3.6

*N=56

for an interview time of 11 to 20 minutes. Hypothesis 6, "there is no significant difference among the three groups of participants in their total 'indications of favor' regarding the length of interviews," was tested using the chi square test. Table 24 gives the results of this test. Since the calculated chi square value of 14.46 exceeded the critical value for the .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. The expected and observed amounts of the various cells of Table 24 were examined for noteworthy differences. For interview times of over twenty minutes, the "indications of favor" of teachers were less than expected, and those for parents were more than expected. The strong support of all groups for the 11 to 20 minute interview time was borne out by the results on this table.

Question 5

Following the pattern described on page 27, the responses from members of the three groups of participants were used to arrive at percentage frequencies for total "indications of favor" regarding the parts of the day most convenient for parents. In examining the tabulation of responses for this question, it should be noted that the total number of responses exceeded the number of respondents since many respondents made reference to more than one part of the day. The percentage frequencies were based on the number of respondents, and should be read as a percentage of the total number of respondents.

Table 24

Chi Square Value of the Among-Group Comparison
of "Indications of Favor" Regarding
Length of Interviews

Length of interviews	10 minutes or less	11-20 minutes	Combined classes: 21-30 minutes and over 30 minutes*	Total
Principals	O=6 E=8.1	O=52 E=44.9	O=8 E=11.0	66
Teachers	O=9 E=7.1	O=44 E=41.2	O=5*** E=9.7	58
Parents	O=7 E=6.8	O=32 E=39.8	O=17*** E=9.3	56
Total	22	128	30	180

Chi Square (calculated) = 14.46**

Chi Square (critical value, significant at the .05
level) = 9.49

*as per Siegel (1956, p. 178)

**Calls for rejection of the null hypothesis

***Noteworthy differences between observed and
expected frequencies.

Principals. Table 25 shows very high percentage frequency "indications of favor" by principals for the late afternoon period of the day, with a total of 90.9 percent of principals favoring that part of the day. However, principals gave some noticeable support to two other parts of the day, with total percentage frequency "indications of favor" of 31.8 percent for the early afternoon and 36.4 percent for the evening.

Teachers. Table 26 shows that teachers also indicated high favor for the late afternoon period, with a total of 84.5 percent of the groups of teachers favoring that part of the day. Teachers gave some noticeable support to the early afternoon, with a total of 32.8 percent favoring that period; and to a lesser degree favored the evening period with 22.4 percent supporting that time.

Parents. Table 27 shows that parents indicated their highest favor for the late afternoon period, with a total percentage frequency of 58.3 percent for that period. However, a total of 29.1 percent of parents favored the evening period, and 25.4 percent favored the early afternoon.

Among-group comparisons (testing Hypothesis 7).

There was agreement among all three groups that indicated that for the convenience of parents, the late afternoon was the most convenient time, with the early afternoon and evening periods being of noticeable importance for the convenience

Table 25

Principals' "Indications of Favor" Regarding
the Parts of the Day Used
For Interviews

Parts of the day	Percentage frequencies*			
	Early morning (before school)	Morning	Early afternoon	Late afternoon Evening
Those satisfied that the parts of the day used were convenient for parents	9.1	7.6	28.8	77.2 22.7
Those dissatisfied according to their suggested times	0	0	3.0	13.6 13.6
Total "indications of favor"	9.1	7.6	31.8	90.9 36.4

*N=66, but the total number of responses exceeded N. Each percentage is to be read as a percentage of the total number of respondents.

Table 26

Teachers' "Indications of Favor" Regarding
the Parts of the Day Used
For Interviews

Parts of the day	Percentage frequencies*			
	Early morning (before school)	Morning	Early afternoon	Late afternoon Evening
Those satisfied that the parts of the day used were convenient for parents	6.9	1.7	31.1	81.2 15.5
Those dissatisfied according to their suggested time	0	0	1.7	3.5 6.9
Total "indications of favor"	6.9	1.7	32.8	84.5 22.4

*N=58, but the total number of responses exceeded N. Each percentage is to be read as a percentage of the total number of respondents.

Table 27

Parents' "Indications of Favor" Regarding
the Parts of the Day Used
for Interviews

Parts of the day	Percentage frequencies*			
	Early morning (before school)	Morning	Early afternoon	Late afternoon Evening
Those satisfied that the parts of the day used were convenient for parents	1.8	5.5	21.8	56.4 18.2
Those dissatisfied according to their suggested times	1.8	0	3.6	1.8 10.9
Total "indications of favor"	3.6	5.5	25.4	58.3 29.1

*N=55, but the total number of responses exceeded N. Each percentage is to be read as a percentage of the total number of respondents.

of parents. Hypothesis 7, "there is no significant difference among the three groups of participants in their total 'indications of favor' regarding the parts of the day used for interviews," was tested using the frequencies of responses. Table 28 gives the results of this test. Since the calculated chi square value of 4.00 was less than the critical value for the .05 level of significance, there was not sufficient reason to reject the null hypothesis.

Question 6

This question asked parents only to state which parent had attended the interview. These percentage frequencies show the results:

Mother only	66.7
Father only	3.5
Mother and father separately at different interviews	1.8
Mother and father together	28.1

The first amount in itself was noteworthy. The latter amount was compared to the result of Question 8.

Question 7

This question, answered by teachers only, asked what percentage of the pupils had been represented by at least one parent at parent-teacher interviews. The results are given as percentage frequencies in the following list:

0 to 25 percent	0
26 to 50 percent	7.4
51 to 75 percent	24.1

Table 28

Chi Square Value of the Among-Group Comparison
of "Indications of Favor" Regarding
the Parts of the Day Used
for Interviews

Parts of the day	Combined classes: Early morning and Morning*	Early afternoon	Late afternoon	Evening	Total***
Principals	0=11 E=9.1	0=21 E=23.3	0=60 E=60.9	0=24 E=22.9	116
Teachers	0=5 E=6.7	0=19 E=17.3	0=49 E=45.1	0=13 E=17.3	86
Parents	0=5 E=5.2	0=14 E=13.4	0=32 E=35.1	0=16 E=13.2	67
Total	21	54	141	53	269
Chi Square (calculated) = 4.00**					
Chi Square (critical value, significant at the .05 level) = 12.59					

*as per Siegel (1956, p. 178)

**Not sufficient reason to call for rejection of the null hypothesis.

***These totals are the total number of responses.

76 to 100 percent

68.5

The high percentage of responses for the last item, along with the other results, indicated a high degree of involvement of parents and teachers in parent-teacher interviews.

Question 8

Teachers only answered this question as well. It asked at what percentage of the interviews both parents were present. The following percentage frequencies indicate the results that were obtained:

0 to 25 percent	82.1
26 to 50 percent	8.9
51 to 75 percent	8.9
76 to 100 percent	0

These results are in close agreement with those of Question 6, answered by parents, in that both questions indicated that it is at a minority of the interviews that both parents attend.

Question 9

Respondents of all three groups were asked to list any other suggestions they wished to make for the improvement of parent-teacher interviews. The results listed here include the ideas that appeared on questionnaires, but in some cases these ideas have been paraphrased or shortened.

Principals. Six principals mentioned that it is important to have in-service training for teachers on how to conduct an interview. Three principals mentioned the

continuous need for interviews; not just those occurring at specific times. Two principals mentioned each of these ideas:

(1) Arrangements should be made with parents who are unable to come at any of the specified times to visit at a time suitable to them.

(2) Arrange the teacher's day so that interviews can be held wholly or partly in the evening.

(3) By scheduling fewer interviews per day, teachers can have a much-needed break between interviews.

(4) Plan to have parent-pupil-teacher conferences once during the year.

(5) Teachers should participate in the development of a form to be used for structuring interview information. These ideas were each mentioned once:

(1) Parent-teacher interviews can take the place of Home and School Associations. They should be an integral part of each reporting period.

(2) How can we overcome the problem arising from the fact that some parents are very difficult to contact at all?

(3) Teachers must be good listeners, but must be able to carry the interview where necessary.

(4) Make the interviews a very special part of the yearly program.

(5) Some parents need more time than others.

(6) Questionnaires on pupil and parent interests filled out early in the year are of much value, and cut out

much "chatter" at interviews.

(7) A low turn-over rate of teachers means that they know the students better early in the year, so they are better able to handle interviews early in the year.

(8) Effectiveness must be measured by the amount of follow-up promised. Commitments made concerning remedial work or enrichment are often not honored because of lack of special services, time, and the complexity of problems.

Teachers. Each of the following ideas was mentioned by two teachers:

(1) The pupil should be included in at least one of the interviews each year.

(2) A policy should be employed whereby some parents are made to attend interviews. Often parents of pupils needing special consideration are those we rarely meet.

(3) The length of interviews and the number of interviews given per child should vary according to need.

(4) Please, let's not have interviews after a full day's work. More school time should be made available for interviews.

Each of the following ideas appeared once:

(1) The teacher needs to have pertinent data available to make the interview meaningful.

(2) A break between interviews is essential so the teacher can jot down notes.

(3) Interviews in early November are too early in the school year for Grade One pupils who need more time to

adjust to the school environment.

(4) Have a flexible schedule; not only after report cards.

(5) For parents who don't come to interviews, and there are many of them, the report card is still needed.

Parents. Two parents commented that they would like to know their child's standing in the class and the class average for use in parent-teacher discussions. The following ideas each appeared once on questionnaires returned by parents:

(1) I feel interviews are only as good as the teacher's understanding and interest in the child and the system.

(2) With the new report card we would not have known what our children's marks were without the interview.

(3) I don't feel that both report cards and interviews are necessary, and would much prefer the interview.

(4) Parent-teacher interviews are only effective if the parent is truly interested in the whole child and not just academic ability, and the teacher is capable of knowing and understanding the child, which is not always the case.

(5) I would like to see all of the teachers who teach my child.

(6) I would like to see a parent-teacher-pupil interview once a year.

(7) If a good understanding between parent and teacher results from the first interview, other appointments

should be made only as problems arise.

(8) We appreciated the special arrangements made to suit the time available to a working mother.

(9) Complete honesty should be employed. If a teacher has a personality clash with the child, she should be honest enough to say so.

Conclusion. These interesting and worthwhile comments by respondents suggested ideas which in many cases were not included in the structure of this study. Some of them are in agreement with ideas which appeared in the current literature mentioned in Chapter 2. While many of them provoke further consideration of parent-teacher interview practices, they are largely outside the scope of this study. They do provide ideas for consideration in later studies, as well as offering suggestions which may promote effectiveness for those engaged in the practice of parent-teacher interviews.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary of the Study

This study attempted to measure the effectiveness of programs of scheduled parent-teacher interviews, as used in elementary schools of the Edmonton public school system during the 1968-69 school term. Two methods were used to measure this effectiveness. Each of the two methods was used with each of the three groups of participants--principals, teachers and parents--separately. The measurements of effectiveness of the three different groups of participants were tested for significant between-group differences using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Two Sample Test to test the null hypotheses. The .05 level of significance was used.

Of the two methods of measuring effectiveness mentioned above, the first was relatively simple. Respondents to the questionnaire were simply asked to rate the interviews they had experienced as being effective or ineffective on a one-to-five scale. The second method was more involved. A list of purposes of parent-teacher interviews derived from the literature was presented to each respondent in order to have each purpose rated as to its importance on a one-to-five scale. This was used as an indication of

the validity and completeness of the list. Then, using the same list of purposes, respondents were asked to give a rating of the extent of achievement of these purposes on a one-to-five scale. In this second way, effectiveness was measured as achievement of the previously established purposes.

To complement these measurements of effectiveness, some additional questions were asked of each respondent under the heading Mechanics of Interviews. They were designed to identify which of the basic mechanics of programs of interviews were considered to be most favorable in promoting effectiveness. The basic mechanics included were the number of interviews per year, the period of the school year used, the length of the interview, and the period of the day. Null hypotheses of no significant among-group differences were formulated for each of the questions about basic mechanics of interviews, and were tested using the chi square test at the .05 level of significance. Additional questions in this section allowed for a check that the respondents, collectively, were actually involved with all of the elementary grades; measured the percentage involvement of parents in such programs of scheduled interviews; and attempted to discover whether interviews were attended by both parents or one, and if only one, which one.

Respondents were allowed to write in additional purposes which they considered to be important, and at

the end of the questionnaire a space was provided for other suggestions regarding the improvement of the effectiveness of parent-teacher interviews. The responses in these two sections supported the judgement that the information derived through this study had some validity.

The respondents were chosen from principals, teachers, and parents who were involved in programs of scheduled parent-teacher interviews in Edmonton public elementary schools during the 1968-69 school year. The total population of principals was canvassed. A random sample of teachers and a random sample of parents was asked to respond to the questionnaire.

The Findings and Conclusions Resulting from Them

Part A--general rating of effectiveness. The results of the general rating of effectiveness of parent-teacher interviews were clearly that all three groups of participants considered the interviews they had experienced to be at least "very valuable and effective." This important result is reflected in the responses in general on the whole of the questionnaire which indicated a high degree of satisfaction.

Part B--perceived purposes. But for one minor exception, the results from all three groups of participants regarding the perceived importance of the list of purposes which was provided were that all of the

purposes were considered to be at least "very important." The one exception involved parents' opinions of the importance of one of the purposes, "to interpret the school to parents so as to create harmony between the school and the community." Even in this case the group opinion was still on the positive side of the mid-point. The "other purposes" added to the list by respondents did not appear to challenge the validity of the original list to any serious degree. This list was considered to represent a complete list of established purposes for parent-teacher interviews.

Part C--purposes achieved. Having established that the list of purposes was reasonably valid and complete, this section of the study provided a measurement of the effectiveness of purposes. All of the results from the three groups of respondents, taken as groups, indicated that the purposes of these interviews were achieved. None of the mean scores for any of the groups of participants on any of the purposes was on the side of the mid-point of the one-to-five scale that would indicate a failure to achieve. The conclusion was that, based on achievement of established purposes, all three groups of participants in parent-teacher interviews considered the interviews they had experienced to have been most effective.

Part D--between-group differences in measurements

of effectiveness. In this part of the study, null hypotheses were formulated to test for significant differences between the three groups of participants in their measurements of effectiveness of parent-teacher interviews. For the general rating of effectiveness the three null hypotheses, which tested for significant differences between the three pairs of groups, were all accepted. There was no significant difference between any two of the three groups of participants in their opinions regarding the general rating of effectiveness.

The three null hypotheses which tested for significant differences between the three pairs of groups regarding their perceptions of the importance of the listed purposes were accepted for all purposes and all pairs of groups, with two exceptions. These two exceptions involved a difference of opinion between parents and principals on two of the purposes. An investigation into this significant difference revealed that while differences did exist, they were still differences on the same side of the mid-point, and as such did not indicate a difference in kind, but rather in degree of opinion. The two differences that existed between groups of participants in their perceptions of the importance of the listed purposes of interviews were still indicative of favorable views of the process.

The final three null hypotheses tested for significant differences between the three pairs of groups of participants regarding their measurements of the achievement of purposes. All three null hypotheses were accepted for all three pairs of groups for all the listed purposes. There were no significant differences between groups of participants regarding the effectiveness of parent-teacher interviews in terms of the achievement of established purposes.

Part E--mechanics of interviews. Responses to the questions of this section established that the members of all three groups of the sample were involved with all of the elementary grades; that the interview programs which existed at the time of this study involved a high percentage of the parents who were given the opportunity to participate; and that it is at a minority of the interviews that both parents attend.

The more important questions of this section identified details of the mechanics of interviews which were thought to be most favorable in promoting effectiveness. There was strong support from all three groups for having two interviews per year, although there was a tendency in the teacher group to favor one, and in the parent group to favor three. All periods of the year except the May-June period met with favor from all groups as being satisfactory for interviews, with the exception that principals were low in their support of the September-

October period. All three groups gave their strongest support to interviews lasting from eleven to twenty minutes, but there was a tendency for parents to support a twenty-one to thirty minute interview time. Teachers gave little support to this longer time. Finally, there was strong support from all three groups for the late afternoon period of the day for interviews, with lesser support from all groups for both the early afternoon and evening periods. Since the directions of the "indications of favor" are largely those of present practice, these results are in line with the general tone of the responses in this study--that the interviews experienced have been effective and satisfactory.

Suggestions for Further Research

The first suggestion for further research in this area results from one of the limitations of this study, namely that it did not allow for consideration of many of the variables which might possibly relate to the effectiveness of such programs of interviews--such as socio-economic status of the parents, grade level of the pupil, teacher qualification, teacher experience, or the organizational climate of the school.

This study could be replicated for different grade levels, or in a different setting.

A further study could possibly investigate changes in the degree of perceived effectiveness of parent-teacher interviews related to: (1) in-service training for teachers in interview techniques, (2) a program designed to encourage the attendance of both parents, (3) the presence of the pupil

at the interview, or (4) a program of interviews designed to fulfill a specific purpose such as interpreting a new program to parents.

It has been said that research is a blind date with knowledge. In approaching this study, the investigator was not able to predict that its results would indicate such a high degree of satisfaction from all three groups of participants. This may be, in part, the result of the degree of bias that incomplete returns cause. It is possible that the dissatisfied parents or teachers were largely those who did not return their questionnaires. The suggestion for further research here is that such dissatisfied participants could be searched out and canvassed for the causes of their dissatisfactions.

A final suggestion has to do with the analysis of the types of communication which take place in such interviews. Maves' (1958, pp. 219-224) distinction between "high-level" and "low-level" performances in interviews puts emphasis on this area, and suggests the need for further understanding of it.

Recommendations

The obvious recommendation resulting from this study would be to continue and extend the use of those practices which have appeared to reach a high level of effectiveness. However, many ideas which were largely outside the limits of this study have come from the responses of participants and from the literature. These

suggest matters which could materially affect the effectiveness of interviews. In-service assistance for teachers, improvement of the level of communication between participants, inclusion of the pupil at interviews, and the like, are ideas which are worthy of due consideration and experimentation by those engaged in the practice of parent-teacher interviews. While the practice has obviously met with a great deal of favor, there is no place for complacency.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER REQUESTING PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

6607 - 87 Avenue
Edmonton 83, Alberta

April 23, 1969

Dear Principal,

For the thesis requirement of my M.Ed. program at the Department of Educational Administration, University of Alberta, I am attempting to do a study of the effectiveness of scheduled parent-teacher interviews in the elementary schools of the Edmonton Public School Board.

Hopefully, this will prove to be a worthwhile study, and of some use to the Edmonton public school system, from which I am presently on sabbatical leave. The trend towards new procedures of reporting pupil progress to parents puts new emphasis on the parent-teacher interview.

This study will be conducted by sending questionnaires to selected principals, teachers, and parents of schools which are involved with programs of scheduled parent-teacher interviews this year (1968-69). In order to proceed, the preliminary information asked for on the accompanying card is required from every principal of an E.P.S.B. school containing elementary grades.

Would you kindly complete it and have your secretary drop it in the mail?

This study has the approval of the Edmonton Public School Board central office.

I would appreciate an early reply! Thanks very much.

Your colleague,

APPENDIX B

RETURN CARD FOR PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

School _____ Principal _____

REGARDING PARENT-TEACHER INTERVIEWS IN THE ELEMENTARY GRADES
OF E.P.S.B. SCHOOLS:

1. Has a program of scheduled parent-teacher interviews been
used for any of the elementary classes of your school this
year, 1968-69 (excluding Special Education classes)?
Yes ____ No ____
2. If so, are they being used for all classes of your school?
Yes ____ No ____
3. If not, please explain which classes or grades are using
them. _____

4. Is your school using the experimental report card (S-N)
this year? Yes ____ No ____

Thanks for your cooperation.

APPENDIX C

COVER LETTER FOR QUESTIONNAIRE

6607 - 87 Avenue
Edmonton 83, Alberta

April 28, 1969

Dear Parent, Teacher, or Principal,

Having been a teacher and assistant principal in the elementary schools of the Edmonton Public School Board for some nine years, I have a special interest in conducting some research which will be of value to our school system.

While on sabbatical leave as a graduate student in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Alberta, I have the opportunity of doing a study of the effectiveness of programs of scheduled parent-teacher interviews as used in the elementary schools of the Edmonton public school system.

You are being contacted as one of the parents or teachers who have been involved in such interviews this year (1968-69), or as the principal of a school where such interviews have been carried on. It would be very much appreciated if you would take the time and trouble to complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to me in the enclosed envelope, at your early convenience.

This study has the approval of the Central Office of the Edmonton Public School Board.

It is anticipated that the processing of the information collected by these questionnaires will begin about May 19, 1969.

May I count on your co-operation? Thanks very much.

Yours sincerely,

APPENDIX D

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Principal _____
Teacher _____
Parent _____

QUESTIONNAIRE

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PARENT-TEACHER INTERVIEWS IN EDMONTON PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Introduction

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information regarding parent-teacher interviews which were held this year (1968-69) as part of a program of scheduled parent-teacher interviews.

It is designed for use by principals, teachers, and parents of the elementary schools of the Edmonton Public School Board. The results will be used in such a way that no specific reference will be made to any particular school, principal, teacher, or parent. (You will notice, in fact, that the questionnaire contains no identification other than the above designation as "principal", "teacher", or "parent".)

Hopefully, the analysis of this information will result in some recommendations for future interview programs which will contribute to increased effectiveness.

Special Instructions

1. Parents who did not attend a parent-teacher interview in an elementary school of the Edmonton public school system this year (1968-69) should not complete the questionnaire. It would be appreciated if such parents would return the questionnaire unanswered.
2. The term "parents" includes guardians, where this applies.
3. School principals should interpret questions in terms of the practices of their schools generally.

PART A -- PERCEIVED PURPOSES

WHAT ARE THE MAIN PURPOSES OF HAVING PARENT-TEACHER INTERVIEWS?

Please indicate how important you consider each of these purposes to be by circling one number after each one.

	EXTREMELY IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT	UNDECIDED	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	UNIMPORTANT
(a) To INFORM PARENTS about their CHILD'S PROGRESS or lack of it.	1	2	3	4	5
(b) To INCREASE THE TEACHER'S UNDERSTANDING of the pupil's behavior, background, attitudes, etc., through INFORMATION GIVEN BY THE PARENTS.	1	2	3	4	5
(c) To allow parents and the teacher to BECOME ACQUAINTED with each other so as to establish a COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP.	1	2	3	4	5
(d) To INTERPRET THE SCHOOL to the parents, so as to create harmony between the SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY.	1	2	3	4	5
(e) To allow parents and teacher to PLAN TOGETHER to help the child reach his maximum development.	1	2	3	4	5
(f) To discuss SPECIAL CONCERNS of the parents and/or teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
(g) To allow parents to find out about the CHILD'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER CHILDREN AND THE TEACHER while at school.	1	2	3	4	5

PLEASE LIST ANY OTHER PURPOSES YOU CONSIDER TO BE IMPORTANT, AND RATE THEM IN THE SAME MANNER.

(h)	_____	1	2	3	4	5

(i)	_____	1	2	3	4	5

PART B -- PURPOSES ACHIEVED

TO WHAT EXTENT ARE THE PURPOSES OF PARENT-TEACHER INTERVIEWS BEING ACHIEVED?

Below is the list of purposes used before. Please indicate the extent to which you consider each of these was achieved by the parent-teacher interviews you have been involved with this year by circling one number after each one.

	VERY SATISFACTORILY ACHIEVED	ACHIEVED	UNDECIDED	HARDLY ACHIEVED	FAILED IN THIS REGARD
(a) To INFORM PARENTS about their CHILD'S PROGRESS or lack of it.	1	2	3	4	5
(b) To INCREASE THE TEACHER'S UNDERSTANDING of the pupil's behavior, background, attitudes, etc., through INFORMATION GIVEN BY THE PARENTS.	1	2	3	4	5
(c) To allow parents and the teacher to BECOME ACQUAINTED with each other so as to establish a COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP.	1	2	3	4	5
(d) To INTERPRET THE SCHOOL to the parents, so as to create harmony between the SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY.	1	2	3	4	5
(e) To allow parents and teacher to PLAN TOGETHER to help the child reach his maximum development.	1	2	3	4	5
(f) To discuss SPECIAL CONCERNS of the parents and/or teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
(g) To allow parents to find out about the CHILD'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER CHILDREN AND THE TEACHER while at school.	1	2	3	4	5

IF YOU ADDED OTHER PURPOSES TO THE PREVIOUS LIST, KINDLY COPY THEM BELOW AND INDICATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEY WERE ACHIEVED, in the same manner.

(h) _____	1	2	3	4	5

(i) _____	1	2	3	4	5

PART C -- GENERAL RATING OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF
SCHEDULED PARENT-TEACHER INTERVIEWS

Based on your experiences this year, how would you rate scheduled parent-teacher interviews for elementary schools? (Please check one of the following.)

- ☐ (a) Exceedingly valuable and effective
☐ (b) Very valuable and effective
☐ (c) Undecided
☐ (d) Of little value; relatively ineffective
☐ (e) Of no value

PART D -- MECHANICS OF INTERVIEWS

(Please use check marks to indicate your responses to the following questions.)

1. With which grade or grades have you as a parent or teacher participated in scheduled parent-teacher interviews this year? (School principals should indicate which grades in their schools have been included in the program.)

<input type="checkbox"/> Grade One	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade Four
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade Two	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade Five
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade Three	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade Six

2. (a) How many times during the year has the opportunity for scheduled interviews been provided?

☐ one ☐ two ☐ three ☐ four or more

- (b) In your opinion, was this the best number of times?

☐ yes ☐ no

- (c) If not, what would the best number of times be?

☐ one ☐ two ☐ three ☐ four or more

3. (a) During which of the following periods was the opportunity for scheduled parent-teacher interviews provided? (Check one for each interview period, please.)

☐ September-October
☐ November-December
☐ January-February
☐ March-April
☐ May-June

- (b) In your opinion, were these periods placed at the best times during the year for maximum effectiveness?

_____yes _____no

- (c) If not, during which periods (you may include those mentioned in part "a" of this question) would you like to have interviews?

_____September-October
 _____November-December
 _____January-February
 _____March-April
 _____May-June

4. (a) Kindly indicate the approximate average length of time of your interview(s).

_____10 minutes or less
 _____11 to 20 minutes
 _____21 to 30 minutes
 _____over 30 minutes

- (b) In your opinion, was the allotted time sufficient to allow for a satisfactory interview?

_____yes _____no

- (c) If not, how much time should be allotted for each interview?

_____11 to 20 minutes
 _____21 to 30 minutes
 _____over 30 minutes

5. (a) What parts of the day were used for your interview(s)? (Check any number of spaces.)

_____early morning (before school)
 _____morning
 _____early afternoon
 _____late afternoon
 _____evening

- (b) In your opinion, were the times of day which were made available convenient for parents?

_____yes _____no

- (c) If not, what times of day should be made available for the convenience of parents? (Include those mentioned in part "a" of this question, if you wish.)

_____early morning (before school)
 _____morning
 _____early afternoon
 _____late afternoon
 _____evening

6. (THIS QUESTION FOR PARENTS ONLY)

Which parent attended the interview or interviews?

- ☐ mother only
☐ father only
☐ mother and father separately at
 different interviews
☐ mother and father together

7. (THIS QUESTION FOR TEACHERS ONLY)

Approximately what percentage of the pupils involved in your interview program have been represented by at least one parent at your parent-teacher interviews?

- ☐ 0 to 25 per cent
☐ 26 to 50 per cent
☐ 51 to 75 per cent
☐ 76 to 100 per cent

8. (THIS QUESTION FOR TEACHERS ONLY)

At approximately what percentage of your interviews were both parents present?

- ☐ 0 to 25 per cent
☐ 26 to 50 per cent
☐ 51 to 75 per cent
☐ 76 to 100 per cent

9. Please list any other suggestions you wish to make for improving the effectiveness of parent-teacher interviews.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND EFFORT!

Kindly return this questionnaire in the stamped, self-addressed envelope provided.

APPENDIX E

REMINDER CARD

Dear Parent/Teacher,

Remember that questionnaire about PARENT-TEACHER INTERVIEWS you received a while ago????

Perhaps you have returned it. If so, please disregard this reminder. And thanks.

The study is being done at the University of Alberta as part of a graduate study program.

You are under no obligation to return the questionnaire, but for this study to be useful THERE MUST BE A LARGE NUMBER OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES RETURNED --more than have now been received.

Your opinions as one closely involved are most valuable. It would be appreciated if you would return it soon. The processing of information is awaiting the receipt of more questionnaires.

Remember.....

*Your name does not appear on the questionnaire.

*Parents who did not attend are asked to return a blank questionnaire.

If you have further questions, or need another questionnaire, please phone me at 466-7519.

Yours sincerely,

J. D. P. Cuyler

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